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# General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

*Official Records*

**114**th plenary meeting
Monday, 18 July 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 113 (*continued*)**

**Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/59/874)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/59/874, which contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that 10 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

Members will recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 59/312 of 14 July 2005, decided that nine out of the 10 Member States should be permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the Assembly takes a final decision during the main part of its sixtieth session. That information is duly reflected in document A/59/874.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/59/874?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 53 (*continued*)**

**Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters**

**Draft resolution (A/59/L.67)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.67.

**Mr. Wali** (Nigeria): On behalf of African Member States, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.67, sponsored by the States listed in the document. I should also like to state that the following States have joined as sponsors of the draft resolution: Benin, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Togo and Swaziland.

Africa's quest for membership on an expanded Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories has been expressed in the various contributions of African States to past debates, including the consultations initiated by you, Sir. Africa's position is based on the appreciation that that important organ has to adapt itself to the current realities by reflecting the principle of equity and

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balance in its composition and competences. That could not be otherwise, given that the Council exercises primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security throughout the world. The Council shall therefore gain in stature and win wider legitimacy within the international community for its decisions if it is truly representative of all the membership.

At their recently concluded fifth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in Sirte, in the great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, African heads of State and Government resolved to throw the weight of their political support behind the current efforts of the international community to achieve that objective. Africa considers that now is the most opportune time to take a decision on that matter, on which there have been several debates over the years. The issues are clear, the challenges obvious and the opportunities enormous. The forthcoming High-Level Event next September will provide Member States with an invaluable opportunity to rekindle the hopes of mankind and confidence in the United Nations as our foremost multilateral body. Such a decision will also serve to convince critics of the Organization that the Member States can rise above narrow self-interest and embrace the larger interests of the international community.

The foregoing points undergird the draft resolution, which, in its preambular paragraphs, contains the following principles. First, it reaffirms the commitment to strengthening the United Nations, including the Security Council. Secondly, the views of Member States should count in the decision to bring to fruition ideas on Council reform. Thirdly, the Security Council needs to be more representative of the entire membership. That entails correction of the current inequity and imbalance in its composition. Fourthly, the Council will be better placed to perform its primary responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security when it is more inclusive.

In the operative paragraphs, the draft resolution makes a strong case for the realization of the foregoing objectives. It envisages a size for the Council that would neither weaken its cohesion nor erode the common will to defend and advance the cause of international peace and security worldwide. It proposes a distribution of the seats in the permanent and non-permanent categories in a manner that should ensure greater representation of the developing countries, whilst taking account of some key players with significant contributions to make to the advancement of the goals and objectives of the United Nations. It seeks to invest the new permanent members in particular with competences commensurate with their new responsibilities in an expanded Council. Finally, it proposes that there be an amendment of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter to bring into effect the proposed expansion.

The African Group considers the draft to be balanced and tailored to meet the challenges of our time. It proposes gains for every region, as recommended by the Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, as well as the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom". It also seeks to address the fundamental imbalance in the composition of the Security Council.

The instruction of African heads of State is to ask that the draft resolution be submitted with a view to serving as a reference point for negotiation with other Member States and interested groups. Africa is therefore open to negotiations, but if negotiations are to be productive, it goes without saying that the interlocutors must have some fundamental points of agreement, bearing in mind the determination of Africa to rectify its present position as the only region without representation on the Security Council in the permanent membership category. The sponsors therefore commend the draft resolution to Member States for consideration.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is pleased to participate in the submission of the African draft resolution on reform and expansion of the Security Council, which encapsulates the vision and wisdom of the African leaders who arrived at this common position at the Sirte summit of African States held at the beginning of this month to demonstrate their aspiration to contribute effectively to the fulfilment of the international community's hopes for real institutional reform based on affirming the principles of justice and equality and on the effective participation of all States, cultures and civilizations in the collective international work of the United Nations.

Despite the fact that African issues dominate more than 60 per cent of the Security Council's agenda, several practices and historical factors have deprived our continent of representation in the permanent category of membership of the Security

Council, as well as of its equitable share in the non-permanent membership. Thus, the time has come to redress the situation as we embark on genuine institutional reform of our Organization and for Africa to regain its legitimate rights with a view to enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of Security Council actions and resolutions, as well as its capacity to address the new challenges and threats faced by the international community.

Africa, in its efforts to reach this stage, has taken several important steps, beginning in Mauritius in 1976, which represents the real launching point towards meeting our common objective, followed by the adoption, in Harare in 1997, of our first African common position, which was recently re-evaluated and reformulated in the Ezulwini Consensus. The Ezulwini Consensus is the basis upon which the Sirte Declaration and the draft resolution before us were adopted.

Throughout the process, our African solidarity, which is the foundation of all our common endeavours, has been the guiding light of our objective. The Ezulwini Consensus was the result of mutual compromises by all African States, whether they supported models A or B. It painted a comprehensive picture of our common position, which is based on demanding two permanent seats, with all the privileges and prerogatives enjoyed by the current permanent members, including the right of veto, in addition to five non-permanent seats, thus allowing all of our five subregions continued representation on the Council at all levels and at all times. Moreover, we have managed to institute solid foundations and guarantees for an expansion that will serve the interests of the whole of Africa. We have clearly emphasized, leaving no room for any doubt, the integrity of all elements of our common African position, without exception.

No other regional group has managed to address the issue at hand in a regional context based on the principles of cooperation and solidarity, which are, in our view, essential to strengthening the democratic foundation upon which each region would select its own representatives to the Security Council. In contrast, Africa is the only region that has addressed the regional dimension of the expansion of the Council with a view to strengthening the ties between the performance of new African members and the core issues of our continent that dominate the Council's agenda, while taking into consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter mandating the election of the members of the Council by a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly.

As is evident in the draft resolution before us, Africa has not considered its own demands, interests and aspirations alone. We have presented an integral vision of a just expansion of the Security Council that takes into consideration the interests of all geographic regions and guarantees a balanced representation of all civilizations and cultures in the expanded Council. In that context, Africa has also taken into consideration the just demands of the Non-Aligned Movement, as contained in the Final Document of the Durban summit of 1998, by proposing an increase in the membership of the Security Council to no less than 26 seats. Furthermore, the African draft resolution reflects the link between African aspirations, on the one hand, and those of all four of the other regional groups of the United Nations, without necessarily undermining the right of each region to determine its own vision of what would serve its idea of justice and what would meet its interests.

In that context, Africa has initiated, through the follow-up mechanism established by its leaders in Sirte, a series of meetings and consultations with all regional and political groupings, as well as other stakeholders, with the objective of expanding the basis for an inclusive agreement that would meet all of our interests, without exception.

The delegation of Egypt would like to align itself with the call made by Nigeria, in its capacity as the current Chairman of the African Union, on all Member States to support the African draft resolution, which presents a new dimension in the institutional reform process to which we aspire. Among the main pillars of the draft resolution is the call for the elimination of the right of veto for all, current and potential permanent members of the Security Council alike, as an anachronistic and undemocratic practice that does not correspond to the spirit of our times. However, and until that objective is fulfilled, Africa would insist, based on the principles of equality, justice and democracy, that all new permanent members enjoy the right of veto on an equal footing with the current permanent members.

Membership on the Security Council is a responsibility that will be shouldered by those States selected for such an honour. Thus, that type of

membership must be based on an increasing capacity to contribute effectively to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We must strive to correct all the mistakes of the past and to ensure a balance between all regions and civilizations through the process of expanding the membership of the Security Council.

To that end, our shared responsibility will also lead us to work for the genuine reform of the working methods of the Security Council, which will essentially address abuses, reaffirm the balance between the mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations, and guarantee that the Security Council will remain a model of justice and equality and a platform for an effective partnership in the formulation and implementation of a new collective security system.

**Mr. Baali** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): This is the second time within a week that the General Assembly has taken up consideration of a draft resolution — this one introduced by Africa — on Security Council reform. In that regard, I fully associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union.

I should like at the outset to stress that, far from being reactive, Africa, in formally submitting its draft resolution, is staking its claim as a powerhouse of ideas with its vision of a renewed, more democratic and more representative Security Council. It is also seeking to remedy a historical injustice, as it continues to be the only continent lacking a permanent seat on the Security Council.

As reflected in the draft resolution now before the Assembly, the African approach to Security Council reform reflects Africa's aspirations as set out in the Ezulwini Consensus and reaffirmed in the Sirte Declaration, as well as its commitment to a reform of the Security Council aimed at better reflecting the realities of today's world and taking better account of the legitimate aspirations of all Member States. Africa proposes to enlarge the Security Council to 26 seats. It claims for itself two permanent seats with the same prerogatives and privileges as current permanent members, including the right of veto, as well as five non-permanent seats. At the appropriate moment, and acting in solidarity and unity and in accordance with the Sirte Declaration, the African Union will decide upon the modalities for the allocation of its seats. The other seats would be allocated to the other regional groups in accordance with the arrangements set out in the African draft resolution.

I should like to recall that that approach was adopted unanimously by the Assembly of the African Union, which is its supreme body. As a result, Africa makes its proposal in a spirit of unity and solidarity and motivated by the requisite determination and commitment to reach our common goal through the participation of all. That goal is to reform the Security Council to make it more democratic, legitimate, representative and effective.

My goal today is not to explain to the Assembly the various elements of the draft resolution or to remind it of the progression and the different stages that Africa travelled following the Mauritius summit to reach the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. However, I would like to underscore the basic tenets that comprise the African position, namely, the two permanent seats to be allocated to Africa would include the right of the veto. Secondly, Africa would be given two additional non-permanent seats. Lastly, the selection of African candidates will be made by the African Union.

I would like to return to our position with regard to the veto. In that connection, I would like to remind the Assembly that, since 1976, African countries have adopted a position of principle against the right of veto, viewing it as anti-democratic, unfair and anachronistic. However, in 1997 at Harare, when the African position on enlargement of the Security Council was drafted and adopted, our countries claimed two permanent seats with veto power. At Ezulwini, Africa reiterated its opposition to the right of the veto, while at the same time deciding that, just as the current permanent members had the right, Africa should have it as well.

For my delegation, the choice is straightforward: either we abolish the right of veto or we grant it to all permanent members. I repeat that we cannot be satisfied with a three-tiered Security Council. What do with diminished permanent seats. We know that without the right of the veto new permanent members would have no impact on the course of events. They would be unable to influence the power relations within the Security Council, which would continue to be dominated by the five existing permanent members. I would reiterate that the key characteristic

permanent seat is not the permanence of the seat itself, but the privileges attached to it.

While we reiterate our readiness and commitment to work with all delegations to make progress on the issue of Security Council reform, I would like to state very clearly that we believe that the Sirte Declaration provides for no deviation or concession with regard to the elements I have just set out, which are the very core of the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. I would also like to reiterate that my delegation is prepared to work diligently to reach a final decision on Security Council reform before September. Such reform is of key importance to all of us, as the status quo is not acceptable to any of us. There remain almost two months between now and the September meeting. I know that you, Mr. President, are prepared to hold a vote on Security Council reform between now and 14 September, once the delegations concerned express the desire for that vote. Let us therefore negotiate in good faith, calmly and with a sense of urgency devoid of haste. Let us not yield to the artificial timetables that would be imposed upon us. If necessary, let us work throughout August to ensure the success of all the reforms the Organization so badly needs — Security Council reform clearly being an integral part of that.

Lastly, I would like to call upon all States to join in sponsoring the African draft resolution and to vote in its favour if it is put to the vote.

**Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to afford the African Union the opportunity to introduce to the General Assembly our draft resolution on Security Council reform (A/59/L.67). We align ourselves with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Union.

The draft resolution introduced today is the product of extensive consultations within the African Union. It sets out the common African position on Security Council reform as adopted by our leaders during the meeting of the Union's Assembly of heads of State held in Sirte, Libya, earlier this month.

Africa seeks two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats in an expanded Security Council, as well as fundamental changes to the working methods of the Council, in order to make it more transparent and accountable. The principle that underpins the draft resolution is the need to ensure that Africa has effective representation in the Security Council, as do all the other regions of the world. That is especially important given that it is African issues that currently dominate the agenda of the Security Council.

We believe that we have reached a decisive phase in the decades-long debate on the reform of the Security Council. Member States now have an unprecedented opportunity to modernize the Council and to make it more representative of, and responsive to, the needs of all countries and peoples. We believe that this is the time to begin to redress the historical injustices in global governance and to give a voice to the billions of people in the developing world who are now excluded from the decision-making process in the Security Council. It is also time to close a chapter of history following two world wars and to move forward in our quest for collective security by working together in a much more inclusive, transparent and democratic manner.

We believe that if we fail to seize this opportunity, the credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council and the entire system of global governance will continue to erode, to the detriment of us all. We believe that we have reached the point where meeting public expectations for good global governance can no longer be deferred to some undetermined point in the future.

We in Africa view Security Council reform as an important and integral part of a larger reform process at the United Nations and beyond. We proceed from the fact that people in developed and developing countries alike aspire to live in dignity, free from want and fear. We are therefore ready to fully engage all regions of the world in the work of the United Nations and to enlist their support for the progress of humanity. We therefore urge the international community to support Africa's aspirations in that regard.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): There is at least one widely held view concerning Security Council reform, namely, that Africa deserves better representation than it currently has in that decision-making body. It was the desire to redress that, at best, unfair situation that on several occasions — at Harare in 1997, Ouagodougou in 1998 and, most recently, at Abuja and Sirte — led African heads of State to reaffirm the need to right that historical wrong. The Sirte Declaration is quite explicit on that point, given that African heads of State called for ensuring "Africa's legitimate rights to a fair and equitable

geographical representation". Making that desire a reality led to the draft resolution that the African Union has today introduced for consideration by the General Assembly (A/59/L.67).

The proposals contained in the draft resolution constitute the minimum Africa can ask, taking into account that it is the only continent without a permanent seat on the Security Council; whereas Europe alone has no fewer than three. Any restructuring of that organ should therefore not fail to consider that fundamental truth.

It is also certain that, given that no reform of the United Nations can take place without Africa — which, with its 53 States, represents roughly 37 per cent of the votes in the General Assembly — everything points to the need for the decisive force represented by Africa to be taken into account. That is not to say that Africa can act alone — far from it. No group can act alone in this enormous undertaking. The solidarity of others is therefore crucial and indispensable. It is for that reason that Africa called for this debate and for consultation on the basis of its draft resolution. It goes without saying that by referring to negotiations we also mean understanding, and even concessions, all of which must take place in a framework of justice and equity. In considering this draft resolution, which is flexible and balanced, we should therefore be able to reach a dynamic compromise.

Once again, the purpose is the democratization of the Security Council to make it reflect the realities of today's world as much as possible. One of those realities is that most of Africa was not represented at the time of the establishment of the United Nations, in 1945. As the Secretary-General has said, we cannot constantly ask States to observe democracy without setting an example. In that regard, we believe that the democratization formula proposed by Africa in the draft resolution now before the Assembly can contribute to establishing the new order to which we aspire.

Burkina Faso therefore very strongly supports the statement made by the representative of Nigeria, whose country currently holds the chairmanship of the African Union, in introducing the draft resolution on behalf of all of Africa. We urge the Assembly to do likewise by fully supporting the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.67.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 53.

*The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.*